

IN THE CLAIMS:

Claims 1-20 have been amended herein. All of the pending claims 1 through 20 are presented below. This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings in the application. Please enter these claims as amended.

1. (Currently Amended) A method for oxidizing one of a gate dielectric layer and a cell dielectric layer on a portion of a silicon substrate in an atmosphere comprising: raising the temperature of ~~said the~~ silicon substrate to a temperature of at least about 600°C.; providing a gas atmosphere of N<sub>2</sub>O, ~~said the~~ gas atmosphere of N<sub>2</sub>O having a pressure of at least about five atmospheres for contacting at least a portion of ~~said the~~ silicon substrate; and contacting a portion of ~~said the~~ gas atmosphere of N<sub>2</sub>O with a catalytic matrix consisting of one or more metals..

2. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 1, further comprising: forming an oxide layer on ~~said the~~ one of a gate dielectric layer and a cell dielectric layer on a the portion of ~~said the~~ silicon substrate.

3. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 1, further comprising: forming an oxide layer on a portion of ~~said the~~ silicon substrate.

4. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 1, further comprising: oxidizing a tantalum oxide layer on a portion of ~~said the~~ silicon substrate.

5. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 1, further comprising: forming a barium strontium titanium oxide layer on a portion of ~~said the~~ silicon substrate.

6. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 1, further comprising: forming a strontium bismuth titanate oxide layer on a portion of ~~said the~~ silicon substrate.

7. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 1, wherein ~~said~~the catalytic matrix is selected from the group consisting of lead, platinum, iridium and palladium.

8. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 1, wherein ~~said~~the catalytic matrix is selected from the group consisting of rhodium, nickel, and silver.

9. (Currently Amended) A method for oxidizing a portion of a silicon substrate comprising:  
changing the temperature of ~~said~~the silicon substrate to a temperature in a range of about 600°C. to 800°C.;  
providing a gas atmosphere of N<sub>2</sub>O, ~~said~~the gas atmosphere of N<sub>2</sub>O having a pressure of at least about five atmospheres; and  
contacting a portion of ~~said~~the gas atmosphere of N<sub>2</sub>O with a catalytic matrix consisting of at least one metal.

10. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 9, further comprising:  
forming a nitride layer on a portion of ~~said~~the silicon substrate.

11. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 9, further comprising:  
forming an oxide layer on a portion of ~~said~~the silicon substrate.

12. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 9, further comprising:  
forming a tantalum oxide layer on a portion of ~~said~~the silicon substrate.

13. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 9, further comprising:  
forming a barium strontium titanium oxide layer on a portion of ~~said~~the silicon substrate.

14. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 9, further comprising:  
forming a strontium bismuth titanate oxide layer on a portion of ~~said~~ the silicon substrate.
15. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 9, wherein ~~said~~ the catalytic matrix is selected from the group consisting of lead, platinum, iridium and palladium.
16. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 9, wherein ~~said~~ the catalytic matrix is selected from the group consisting of rhodium, nickel, and silver.
17. (Currently Amended) A method for oxidizing a portion of a silicon substrate comprising:  
providing an atmosphere having a temperature of at least about 600°C.;  
providing a gas atmosphere of N<sub>2</sub>O, ~~said~~ the gas atmosphere of N<sub>2</sub>O having a pressure of at least about five atmospheres;  
contacting at least a portion of ~~said~~ the silicon substrate with a portion of ~~said~~ the gas atmosphere of N<sub>2</sub>O having a pressure of at least about five atmospheres; and  
contacting a portion of ~~said~~ the gas atmosphere of N<sub>2</sub>O with a catalytic matrix consisting of at least one metal.
18. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 17, further comprising:  
forming at least one of a nitride layer on a portion of ~~said~~ the silicon substrate, oxide layer on a portion of ~~said~~ the silicon substrate, a tantalum oxide layer on a portion of ~~said~~ the silicon substrate, a barium strontium titanium oxide layer on a portion of ~~said~~ the silicon substrate, and a strontium bismuth titanate oxide layer on a portion of ~~said~~ the silicon substrate.
19. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 17, wherein ~~said~~ the catalytic matrix is selected from the group consisting of lead, platinum, iridium and palladium.

20. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 17, wherein ~~said the~~the catalytic matrix is selected from the group consisting of rhodium, nickel, and silver.